

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming system comprising:

an image forming apparatus body; and

5 at least one postprocessing unit selectively
attached thereto among a plurality of types of attachable
postprocessing units,

wherein said at least one postprocessing unit is a
single-sheet processing machine for postprocessing sheet in
10 units of a sheet and wherein the single-sheet processing
machine has a plurality of types of single-sheet processing
functions of postprocessing sheet in units of a sheet and a
sheet attachment function of attaching a cover sheet or an
insert sheet to an output sheet bulk.

15 2. The image forming system of claim 1, wherein
said single-sheet processing machine has all single-sheet
processing functions of postprocessing sheet in units of a
sheet.

20 3. The image forming system of claim 1, wherein
the single-sheet processing function is one of a punching
function of punching sheet in units of a sheet, a folding
function of folding sheet in units of a sheet, a
perforating function of perforating sheet in units of a
sheet, and a single-sheet cutting function of cutting sheet
25 in units of a sheet.

4. The image forming system of claim 1, wherein
said single-sheet processing machine has a single-sheet

processing carry-in unit for receiving a sheet conveyed from the image forming apparatus body and a single-sheet processing carry-out unit for discharging the sheet to any other postprocessing unit, wherein the single-sheet

5 processing machine is directly attached to the image forming apparatus body without intervention of any other postprocessing unit.

5. The image forming system of claim 1, wherein said single-sheet processing machine has a punching unit
10 for punching sheet in units of a sheet and a folding unit for folding sheet in units of a sheet, the folding unit arranged on the downstream side of the punching unit in the sheet conveying direction.

6. The image forming system of claim 1,
15 wherein said single-sheet processing machine includes:

a single-sheet processing carry-in unit for receiving a sheet conveyed from said image forming apparatus body;

20 a single-sheet processing carry-out unit for discharging the sheet to any other postprocessing unit;

a first processing unit for postprocessing sheet in units of a sheet;

a second processing unit for postprocessing sheet
25 in units of a sheet, the second processing unit arranged on the downstream side of the first processing unit in the sheet conveying direction;

a first conveying path for conveying the sheet received by the single-sheet processing carry-in unit to the single-sheet processing carry-out unit without intervention of the first processing unit and the second processing unit;

a second conveying path for conveying the sheet received by the single-sheet processing carry-in unit to the first processing unit;

a third conveying path for conveying the sheet from the first processing unit to said second processing unit; and

a fourth conveying path for conveying the sheet from the second processing unit to the first conveying path.

7. The image forming system of claim 6, wherein the third conveying path of said single-sheet processing machine has a third A conveying path for conveying a sheet having a length no more than a predetermined length in the sheet feeding direction to the second processing unit and a third B conveying path for conveying a sheet having a length more than the predetermined length in the sheet feeding direction to the second processing unit.

8. The image forming system of claim 6, wherein said single-sheet processing machine has a sheet attachment unit for placing cover sheets or insert sheets attached by the sheet attachment function and a fifth conveying path for conveying the cover sheets or the insert sheets from

the sheet attachment unit to the first conveying path.

9. The image forming system of claim 8, wherein said single-sheet processing machine has a branching portion where the conveying path branches out into the first conveying path and the second conveying path on the downstream side of the single-sheet processing carry-in unit in the sheet conveying direction and a joining portion where the fifth conveying path joins the first conveying path on the upstream side of the branching portion in the sheet conveying direction.

10. The image forming system of claim 6, wherein said single-sheet processing machine has a single-sheet processing discharge unit for discharging remaining sheets in the image forming system at an occurrence of a sheet jam or a test-recorded sheet for use in checking an image recording condition and a sixth conveying path for conveying sheets from the first conveying path to the single-sheet processing discharge unit.

11. The image forming system of claim 1, further comprising an edge stapling machine, which is one of said plurality of types of postprocessing units, for binding a sheet bulk made of a plurality of sheets at an edge thereof,

wherein said edge stapling machine has an edge stapling carry-in unit for receiving sheets conveyed from said image forming apparatus body or from any other postprocessing unit; and

wherein, if said single-sheet processing machine and said edge stapling machine are selectively attached, the edge stapling machine is attached on the downstream side of said single-sheet processing machine in the sheet conveying direction.

12. The image forming system of claim 11, wherein said edge stapling machine has at least one of a stapling function of stapling the sheet bulk, a tape binder function of tape-binding the sheet bulk, and a pasting function of pasting the sheet bulk, for the edge binding of the sheet bulk.

13. The image forming system of claim 11, wherein said edge stapling machine has an open discharge unit for discharging the sheet bulk made of a plurality of bound sheets at the side of the image forming apparatus and is attachable in the most downstream of the image forming system in the sheet conveying direction.

14. The image forming system of claim 11, wherein said edge stapling machine has an edge stapling discharge unit for discharging remaining sheets in the image forming system at an occurrence of a sheet jam or a test-recorded sheet for use in checking an image recording condition.

15. The image forming system of claim 1, further comprising a center stitching machine, which is one of said plurality of types of postprocessing units, for folding and stitching a sheet bulk made of a plurality of sheets,

wherein said center stitching machine has a center stitching carry-in unit for receiving sheets conveyed from any other postprocessing unit attached on the upstream side in the sheet conveying direction and a center stitching
5 carry-out unit for conveying sheets to any other postprocessing unit attached on the downstream side in the sheet conveying direction; and

wherein, if said single-sheet processing machine and said center stitching machine are selectively attached,
10 said center stitching machine is attached on the downstream side of said single-sheet processing machine in the sheet conveying direction.

16. The image forming system of claim 15,
wherein said center stitching machine has a stapling
15 function for stitching a sheet bulk made of a plurality of sheets.

17. The image forming system of claim 15,
wherein said center stitching machine has a folding
function for folding a stitched sheet bulk made of a
20 plurality of sheets and a sheet cutting function for cutting a folded sheet bulk made of a plurality of sheets.

18. The image forming system of claim 15,
wherein said center stitching machine has a center
stitching discharge unit for discharging remaining sheets
25 in the image forming system at an occurrence of a sheet jam or a test-recorded sheet for use in checking an image recording condition.

19. The image forming system of claim 15,
wherein said center stitching machine has a center-stitched
sheet stacking unit where a center-stitched sheet bulk is
placed and which is movable relative to the center
5 stitching machine body.

20. The image forming system of claim 1, further
comprising a case binding machine, which is one of said
plurality of types of postprocessing units, for case-
binding a sheet bulk made of a plurality of sheets with a
10 cover sheet,

wherein, if said single-sheet processing machine
and said case binding machine are selectively attached,
said case binding machine is attached on the downstream
side of said single-sheet processing machine in the sheet
15 conveying direction.

21. The image forming system of claim 20,
wherein said case binding machine has a pasting function of
pasting the sheet bulk or a stapling function of binding
the sheet bulk.

22. The image forming system of claim 20,
wherein said case binding machine has a case-bound sheet
cutting function for cutting the case-bound sheet bulk.

23. The image forming system of claim 20,
wherein said case binding machine has a case binding
25 discharge unit for discharging remaining sheet in the image
forming system at an occurrence of a sheet jam or a test-
recorded sheet for use in checking an image recording

condition.

24. The image forming system of claim 20,
wherein said case binding machine has a case-bound sheet
stacking unit where a case-bound sheet bulk is placed and
5 which is movable relative to the case binding machine body.

25. The image forming system of claim 1, further
comprising a high-volume stacker, which is one of said
plurality of types of postprocessing units and which can
accommodate a large quantity of output sheet,

10 wherein the high-volume stacker has a detachable
high-volume stacking unit where a large quantity of output
sheet is stacked and which is detachable from a high-volume
stacker body; a high-volume stacking carry-in unit for
receiving sheets conveyed from said image forming apparatus
15 body or any other postprocessing unit attached on the
upstream side in the sheet conveying direction; and a high-
volume stacking carry-out unit for conveying the sheets to
any other postprocessing unit attached on the downstream
side in the sheet conveying direction.

20 26. The image forming system of claim 25,
wherein said high-volume stacker has a high-volume stacking
discharge unit for discharging remaining sheets in the
image forming system at an occurrence of a sheet jam or a
test-recorded sheet for use in checking an image recording
25 condition.

27. The image forming system of claim 1, wherein
all of said plurality of types of postprocessing units have

their discharge units for discharging remaining sheets in the image forming system at an occurrence of a sheet jam or a test-recorded sheet for use in checking an image recording condition.

5 28. An image forming system comprising:

 an image forming apparatus body; and

 at least one postprocessing unit attached to the image forming apparatus body selectively from a plurality of types of attachable postprocessing units,

10 wherein said at least one postprocessing unit is a single-sheet processing machine for postprocessing sheet in units of a sheet, which is attached at the most upstream location of other postprocessing units in the sheet conveying direction; and

15 wherein said single-sheet processing machine has at least one type of single-sheet processing function for postprocessing paper in units of a sheet and a sheet attachment function for attaching a cover sheet or an insert sheet to an output sheet bulk.

20 29. The image forming system of claim 28, wherein said single-sheet processing machine has a folding function for folding two or more sheets at a time.

 30. A single-sheet processing machine which is attachable to an image forming apparatus body, having a
25 plurality of types of single-sheet processing functions for postprocessing sheet in units of a sheet and a sheet attachment function of attaching a cover sheet or an insert

sheet to an output sheet bulk.